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ABSTRACT

There exists a body of theory and assumption that runs squarely at odds with that which has provided the ideological underpinnings of educational administration as it has been developed over the past two decades. The ideological conflict between these two views rests on two fundamentally different ways of looking at the world. One is the established view both in the study of organizations generally and in the study of educational administration in particular. The philosophical basis of this natural systems view is realism--the world exists and is knowable as it really is, and organizations are real entities with lives of their own. The philosophical basis of the alternative phenomenological view is idealism--the world exists, but different people construe it in very different ways. Organizations are invented social reality. This paper outlines the phenomenological view and recommends its application both in organization and administrative theory. The author concludes that no general science of organization and administration is at hand and that the possibility of training administrators through the study of organization theory has been seriously overestimated. He suggests that research into organization problems should consider and begin to use the phenomenological perspective. A selected list of references is included. (Author/DN)

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# THEORY IN THE STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

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For over two decades now educational administration has aspired to be a social science (Culbertson and Shibles, 1973). Celebrating its emancipation from the press of immediate, practical affairs, the field turned instead to discovery of the basic relationships and principles which underlie day-to-day concerns. The professor supplanted the practitioner as the source of valid knowledge about administration. If practitioners did not know or accept that they were no longer masters of the basic knowledge which underlay their craft, it did not matter. Even the scholar-practitioner, Chester Barnard, in introducing Simon's classic writings claimed that it was the scholar's knowledge of the "abstract principles of structure" rather than the practitioner's knowledge of "concrete behavior" and "specific practice" which leads to an understanding of "organizations of great variety" (Simon, 1957, pp. xlii-xliv). Things are not what they seem, no more in educational administration than in other realms of reality. We need the scientist and his theory to interpret them to us. His knowledge, though it may be incomplete and is certainly subject to improvement, has the virtue of universal applicability. Acting on this conviction, scholars in educational administration have sought to understand how organizations really work and to use this knowledge towards the improvement of educational practice.

Inquiry in educational administration has leaned heavily on the belief that a general science of organizations has provided the needed theoretical underpinnings (Campbell and Gregg, 1957; Halpin, 1958; Getzels, Lipham, and Campbell, 1968; Milstein and Belasco, 1973) for a basic understanding of organizations while the sister social sciences have provided the concepts and research tools needed to identify and resolve their administrative problems (Downey and Enns, 1963; Tope et al., 1965). Since this happy combination of theory and method yields an understanding of organizations as they really are, it then becomes possible also to say how educational administrators may be trained to improve organizations and administrative practice within them (Culbertson et al., 1973). Although the claim is seldom if ever made explicitly, this line of reasoning, linking a general theory of organizations to the training of administrators, implies that we have at hand both the theory and method which permits us to improve schools and the quality of whatever it is that goes on within them. That change in schools proceeds without assistance from an applied organization theory or, indeed, in contravention to it, (Fullan, 1972) usually fails to shake our faith in such theory.

It will surely come as no surprise to anyone who examines the references cited to this point that most of them are American in origin, since it was in the United States that the movement to conceive educational administration as a social science arose in the late 1940's. A decade later the movement had taken hold in Canada and sometime later in Australia

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and England. As the concept of educational administration as a profession and social science gains ever wider recognition and acceptance, it becomes appropriate to examine the theory and assumptions which underlie the field of study. In particular we need to ask whether the theory and assumptions still appear to hold in the settings where they were developed before they are recommended and applied to totally new settings. Such an examination is not only appropriate but essential in the face of an alternate view which sees organizations not as structures subject to universal laws but as cultural artifacts dependent upon the specific meaning and intention of people within them. This alternate view, which stems from nineteenth century German Idealism (Deutscher, 1973, p. 326), bears the awkward name phenomenology (Phillipson, 1972), though it might with equal justification be called the method of understanding, as it is in the work of Max Weber (Eldridge, 1971, p. 28). What we call the view is not important. What matters is that there exists a body of theory and assumption which runs squarely at odds with that which has provided the ideological underpinnings of educational administration as it has developed over the past two decades. The ideological conflict between these two views rests on two fundamentally different ways of looking at the world. One is the established view both in the study of organizations generally and in study of educational administration. In this paper, I will attempt to outline the alternative view and recommend its application both in organization and administrative theory.

It is surely no accident that the alternative view has its roots in European philosophy and social science. And it is at least noteworthy that this view has a current flowering in England where it is exerting a strong influence in both sociology (Filmer, et al., 1972; Dawe 1970) and in education (Young, 1971, Cosin, et al., 1971). I do not wish to drive the differences in the views to the point of a spurious contrast between American and European social science. The alternate view which I will outline has its supporters in the United States too (Garfinkel, 1967; Cicourel, 1964; Louch 1966; Wilson, 1970). Two points should be made here. First, and of lesser importance, phenomenology has yet to influence the study of organizations in the United States despite the existence of a long-standing phenomenological tradition in some sociological schools of thought in that country.[1] In England, both theory and research on organizations reflect the phenomenological perspective (Tipton, 1973; Silverman 1970). Second, and more important since it relates to the heart of the issue, the existence of the two competing ideologies illustrates the fundamental contention of phenomenology that there are no fixed ways for construing the social world around us. These ways are products of particular settings and circumstances rather than expressions of universal ideas and values. Our concepts of organizations must therefore rest upon the views of people in particular times and places, and any effort to understand them in terms of a single set of ideas, values and laws must be doomed to failure. The alternative view rejects

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1. Deutscher (1973, p. 324ff) describes these schools of thought and their connections to idealistic philosphy. He also points out (p. 325n) that those he calls the "Harvard functionalists" make no mention of phenomenology or its proponents in their encyclopaedic history of theories of society. See, Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory, 2 vols., Talcott Parsons et al. (New York: The Free Press, 1961).

the assumption, underlying much of organization theory, that organizations belong to a single species that behaves in predictable ways according to common laws: This view finds forceful expression in the work of Mayntz (1964), a European scholar of organizations:

> ....Propositions which hold for such diverse phenomena as an army, a trade union, and a university ....must necessarily be either trivial or so abstract as to tell hardly anything of interest about concrete reality....After all, the distinct character of an organization is certainly determined, among other things, by the nature, interests, and values of those who are instrumental in maintaining it (pp. 113-114).

## TWO VIEWS OF SOCIAL REALITY

The conflicting views on organizations of which I have been speaking represent vastly different ways of looking at social reality and rest on sharply contrasting processes for interpreting it. These contrasts are summarized in Table 1 in which I have compared the two views and suggested how they differ with respect to a number of critical issues. Each of these issues has implications for the theory of organizations and for research undertaken in line with such theory. Necessarily then, these contrasts also have implications for a number of practical questions in the conduct of affairs in organizations. Some of these will be explored in the concluding section of this paper. Although there is no generally accepted names for identifying the two views contrasted in Table 1, it should be clear that they reflect two approaches to understanding reality and that these approaches run broadly through many fields of study. However, a major point of distinction between the perspectives may be made by calling them the naturalistic view and the phenomenological view. On the one hand, the distinction evokes the imagery of systems theory which, more than any other mode of thought, has dominated enquiry into organizations (Mayntz, 1964, pp. 103-4) in modern times. At the same time, the distinction suggests, through the name phenomenology, that view which sees organization as the perceived social reality within which individuals make decisions (Greenfield, 1973, p. 557). The heart of this view is not a single abstraction called organization, but rather the varied perceptions by individuals of what they can, should, or must do in dealing with others. It is noteworthy that this tradition--the decision-making tradition (Cyert and March, 1963; Simon, 1964) in organizational theory--is frequently cited in scholarly writing, but seldom followed in analyses of organizations. This tradition, culminating currently in the creative insights of James March (1972) into organizational realities, reaches back into the work of Simon (1957; March and Simon, 1958) and thence into the work of Max Weber (Gerth and Mills, 1946) and the German philosophers and sociologists of the phenomenological tradition (Deutscher, 1973, p. 327; Silverman, 1972, pp. 184-5).

What are some of the particular issues involved in the contrast between the systems and phenomenological views? These are suggested in Table 1 where the two views are compared on a number of points. In the discussion which follows, the phenomenological view is emphasized, since it is assumed that the foundations of the systems view are the more

TABLE 1

ALTERNATIVE BASES FOR INTERPRETING SOCIAL REALITY

| Dimensions of comparison | Two Views | |
|---|---|---|
| | Natural systems | Phenomenology |
| Philosophical basis | Realism: the world exists and is knowable as it really is. Organizations are real entities with a life of their own. | Idealism: The world exists but different people construe it in very different ways. Organizations are invented social reality. |
| The role of social science | Discovering the universal laws of society and human conduct within it. | Discovering how different people interpret the world in which they live. |
| Basic units of social reality | The collectivity: society or organizations. | Individuals acting singly or together. |
| Method of understanding | Identifying conditions or relationships which permit the collectivity to exist. Conceiving what these conditions and relationships are. | Interpretation of the subjective meanings which individuals place upon their action. Discovering the subjective rules for such action |
| Theory | A rational edifice built by scientists to explain human behaviour. | Sets of meanings which people use to make sense of their world and behavior within it. |
| Research | Experimental or quasi-experimental validation of theory. | The search for meaningful relationships and the discovery of their consequences for action. |
| Methodology | Abstraction of reality especially through mathematical models and quantitative analysis. | The representation of reality for purposes of comparison. Analysis of language and meanin |
| Society | Ordered. Governed by an uniform set of values and made possible only by those values. | Conflicted. Governed by the values of people with access to power. |
| Organizations | Goal Oriented. Independent of people. Instruments of order in society serving both society and the individual. | Dependent upon people and their goals. Instruments of power which some people control and can use to attain ends which seem good to them. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Organizational pathologies | Organizations get out of kilter with social values and individual needs. | Given diverse human ends there is always conflict among them. |
| Prescription for curing organizational ills | Change the structure of the organization to meet social values and individual needs. | Find out what values are embodied in organizational action and whose they are. Change the people or change their values if you can. |

familiar of the two views.

Philosophical basis.

The systems view assumes that the world is knowable as it is. Although the acquisition of such knowledge requires the intervention and help of scientists, theorists, and scholars, there exists an ultimate reality which may be perceived through the scientific method and similar forms of rational analysis. In systems theory, the prevailing image of the organization is that of an organism. Organizations exist; they are observable entities which have a life of their own. Organizations are like people although sometimes the image is more that of the recalcitrant child, rather than the mature adult. In any case, the theory endows organizations with many human properties. They have goals towards which they direct their activities; they respond and adapt to their environments. Nor can organizations escape the fate of organisms illadapted to their environments. Indeed, the fate of organizations depends upon their ability to adapt to an increasingly complex and turbulent environment. Following the Darwinian logic inherent in their image of the organization, systems theorists (Bennis, 1968) see small, quick-witted, democratic organizations replacing the ponderous, bureaucratic forms now expiring around us. The fact that bureaucratic organizations appear as large, robust, and formidable as ever does not appear to shake belief in organizations as living entities subject to stringent laws permitting only the fittest to survive. Indeed our belief in the living organization is likely to be so strong, we fail to notice that the systems theorists have shifted from telling us about the way organizations are to telling us how they ought to be. "If only organizations were adapted to their environments," the argument runs, "imagine how quickly these bureaucratic forms would disappear." In thinking about the dazzling prospect of a world in which organizations were creatures closely adapted to a benign, well-intentioned environment, we forget that the role of theory is to tell us the way things are rather to point the way they ought to be or how we would like them to be. Our image of the organization as an entity, as a living entity, rests upon an anology. But we fail to draw the conclusion that the analogy is useless when discrepancies appear (Willer, 1967, p. 33) between the image and the phenomena observed.

The phenomenological view of reality contrasts sharply with that of systems theory. This view has its origin in the distinction Kant drew between the noumenal world (the world as it is) and the phenomenal world (the world as we see it). For Kant, a world of reality does indeed exist, but man can never perceive it directly; reality is always glossed over with human interpretations which themselves become the realities to which man responds. And man is always learning, always interpreting, always creating the "reality" which he sees about him. In popular form, the Kantian philosophy has been expressed as follows: "Man does not create his world, but he does make it." It therefore comes as no surprise to the phenomenologist that people are killed by "empty" guns. But for the phenomenologist, beliefs are always of greater consequence than facts in shaping behaviour. The bullet may indeed be in the gun, but it is the individual's belief about an empty chamber which causes him to idly pull the trigger. Deutscher (1973) summarizes the phenomenological view as follows:

> The phenomenological orientation always sees reality as constructued by men in the process of thinking about it. It is the social version of Descartes' Cogito, ergo sum. For the phenomenologist it becomes Cogitamus, ergo est --we think, therefore it is! (1973, p. 328)

The Role of Social Science

The implications of the phenomenological view are of critical importance in shaping our views both of the social sciences and of a study of organizations founded on them, as may be seen in the contrasting positions taken by Weber and Durkheim (Bendix and Roth, 1971, pp. 286-97). For Weber, working within his "method of understanding," "there is no such thing as a collective personality which 'acts'", only individuals acting on their interpretations of reality. In contrast, Durkheim, convinced of an ultimate, knowable social reality, sought to eliminate the perceptions of individuals and to find "the explanation of social life in the nature of society itself" (Bendix and Roth, 1971, p. 291). Thus Durkheim spent his life building a sociology around notions of "elemental" forms which provide the invariable units out of which social life is built. Weber, on the other hand, explored the ideas, doctrines, and beliefs with which men endowed their organizations and which provided the motivation for action within them. Durkheim's path leads to generality, abstraction, and universality in the study of organizations; Weber's leads to the particularistic, the concrete, and the experience-based study of organizations. Durkheim's path leads to an asceptic study of organizations, Weber's to one which smells of reality.

The phenomenological view leads to the concept of organizations as "invented social reality" (Greenfield, 1973, p. 556) and to the paradox that, having invented such reality, man is perfectly capable of responding to it as though it were not of his own invention. (Silverman, 1970, p. 133). More basically, however, the phenomenological perspective questions the possibility of objectivity in what Weber calls "the cultural sciences." While it is possible for such sciences to pursue inquiry within a logically rigorous methodology and for them to take into account certain basic social facts such as where people live and what they do, it is not possible for cultural scientists to give us "a direct awareness of the structure of human actions in all their reality" (Eldridge, 1971, p. 16). Thus the notion of discovering the ultimate laws which govern social reality becomes an ever receding phantasy which retreats as we attempt to approach it. Such bogus 'laws' as the law of supply and demand were, both for Weber and Durkheim, "maxims for action," advice to people on how to protect their interests if they wished to be "fair and logical" (Eldridge, 1971, p. 18). At the same time, this limitation on the cultural sciences, permits them to do what is never possible in the physical sciences: The cultural scientist may enter into and take the view point of the actor whose behaviour is to be explained.

> We can accomplish something which is never attainable in the natural sciences, namely the subjective understanding of the action of component individuals...We do not 'understand' the behaviour of cells, but can only

> observe the relevant functional relationships and generalize on the basis of these observations. (Weber, 1947, pp. 103-4)

Thus the purpose of social science is to understand social reality as different people see and to demonstrate how their views shape the action which they take within that reality. Since the social sciences cannot penetrate to what lies behind social reality, they must work directly with man's definitions of reality and with the rules he devises for coping with it. While the social sciences do not reveal ultimate truth, they do help us to make sense of our world. What the social sciences offer is explanation, clarification, and demystification of the social forms which man has created around himself. In the view of some (Dawe, 1970, p. 211), the social sciences may lead us to enlightenment and to liberation from the forces which oppress man. In the phenomenological view, these forces stem from man himself, not from abstractions which lie behind social reality and control man's behaviour within that reality.

Theory about what

The two views give rise to opposing theories about the world and the way it works, since each sees reality in different kinds of things. Each approaches theory building from a point of view which is normative rather than descriptive. In the natural systems view, the basic reality is the collectivity; reality is in society and its organizations. Assuming the existence of an ultimate social reality, the role of theory is to say how it hangs together or how it might be changed so that it hangs together even more effectively (Merton, 1957; Etzioni, 1960). Thus functional analysis--the theory associated with the systems view--becomes a justification of the way social reality is organized rather than an explanation of it. In this view, the theory becomes more important than the research because it tells us what we can never perceive directly with our senses--it tells us the ultimate reality behind the appearance of things and it establishes a view which is essentially beyond confirmation or disproof by mere research.

The phenomenological view begins with the individual and seeks to understand his interpretations of the world around him. The theory which emerges must be grounded (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) in data from particular people in particular organizations. That these data will be glossed with the meanings and purposes of those people and places is the whole point of this philosophical view. The point of scientific investigation is to understand how that glossing of reality goes on at one time and place and to compare it with what goes on in different times and places. Thus organizations are to be understood in terms of people's beliefs about their behaviour within them. If we are to understand organizations, we must understand what people within them think of as right and proper to do. Within this framework we would certainly not expect people and organizations everywhere to have the same views. In fact, it is the existence of differences in belief structures which provides us with the key to interpreting them. People are not likely to think of their own views as strange. Indeed it is only in contrast to other views that we come to understand our own. Theory thus becomes the sets of meanings which yield insight and understanding of people's behaviour. These theories are likely to

be as diverse as the sets of human meanings and understandings which they are to explain. In the phenomenological perspective, the hope for a universal theory of organizations collapses into multifaceted images of organizations as varied as the cultures which support them.

The view of theory as arising from our understanding is expressed by Walsh:

> The point about the social world is that it has been preselected and preinterpreted by its members in terms of a series of commonsense assumptions which constitute a taken-for-granted scheme of reference....In this manner factual reality is conferred upon the social world by the routine interpretive practices of its members. The implication of this is that every man is a practical theorist when it comes to investigating the social world, and not just the sociologist. (1972, p. 26)

Thus, the naturalist tries to devise general theories of social behaviour and to validate them through ever more complex research methodologies which push him further from the experience and understanding of the everyday world. The phenomenologist works directly with such experience and understanding to build his theory upon them. As Kuhn (1970) points out, our theories are not just possible explanations of reality; they are sets of instructions for looking at reality. Thus choice among theories and among approaches to theory building involves normative and--especially in the social sciences--moral questions. Choice among them is in part a matter of preference, but choice may also be made on the basis of which theories direct us to the most useful problems and which provide the most helpful insights into them.

Research and Methodology.

In the systems view, research is directed at confirming theory. Theory, in this view, is something which scientists build, largely from the armchair, by thinking up what must be the ultimate explanation for the phenomena observed. Contrary to accepted opinion, Kuhn (1970, p. 16) has argued that such theory is never open to disproof and serves instead as a "consensual agreement among scientists about what procedures shall constitute scientific activity and hence which explanations will count as scientific explanations" (Walsh 1972, p. 25).

From the phenomenological perspective, research, theory, and methodology must be closely associated. Theory must arise out of the process of investigation itself and be intimately connected with the data under investigation. In this view, the aim of theory should be explanation and clarification. Thus research and theory which fulfils this aim must depend not only upon what is being explained but also upon to whom it is explained, and with what. Louch argues this view as follows:

> Explanation, in Wittgenstein's phrase, is a family of cases joined together only by a common aim, to make something plain or clear. This suggests that

> a coherent account of explanation could not be given without attending to the audience to whom an explanation is offered or the source of puzzlement that requires an explanation to be given. There are many audiences, many puzzles ....(1966, p. 233).

Research in the naturalist mode is prone to use experimental methods to establish relationships among variables. The research often substitutes mathematical models for the substantive theoretical model and is satisfied if statistically significant relationships are found among the variables of the mathematical model. The aim is to relate variables x and y; little effort is spent on determining whether x and y exist in any form which is meaningful to or has consequences for actors within a social situation. Phenomenologically-based research, on the other hand, aims at dealing with the direct experience of people in specific situations. Therefore the case study and comparative and historical methods become the preferred means of analysis. These methods are perhaps found in their most developed form in the work Weber did in building ideal types for organizational analysis. These types should be seen as "characterizations or impressions of ways of thought and styles of living" which permit comparison and understanding of them (Louch, 1966, p. 172). What Weber did in building these ideal types was to worm his way into the heads of bureaucrats, clerics, and commercial men in order "to discern logical connections among propositions expressing [their] beliefs about the world" (Louch, 1966, p. 173). The moral consequences of these beliefs may also be made plain and checked against "reality". The close connection among theory, research, and ethics thus becomes obvious.

Thus an organizational theory based upon understanding rejects the emphasis which much of contemporary social science places upon quantification, more complex mathematical models, and bigger number crunchers in the shape of better and faster computers. As Burns (1967, p. 127) has pointed out, better manipulation of numbers cannot substitute for the emptiness of the concepts to which they apply. This fixation on numbers without concern for the concepts they are thought to represent leads to a sickness of social science which Sorokin has called "quantophrenia" and which Rothkopf (1973, p. 6) likens to the Leerlauf reactions described by Lorenz. In these reactions, animals go through elaborate stereotyped performances for hunting or mating when no other living creature is there to see or respond to the performances.

If we move towards improved understanding in our research, we might change our image of what constitutes the essential research tool and supplant the computer with Weber's notion of the ideal type. An ideal type provides us with an image of a social situation at a particular time and place. We may then surround this image with others made of different organizations or of the same organization at other times. By looking at these images comparatively, by seeing them almost as the frames of a motion picture, we begin to understand our world better and to comprehend its differences and the processes of change occurring within it. This direction in theory and research leads to an investigation of language and the categories it contains for understanding the world (Bernstein 1971a; 1971b).

It leads also to an investigation of the processes (Scheff, 1973; Garfinkel, 1964) by which we negotiate with each other and so come to define what we will pay attention to in our environment and our organizations.

Society and its organizations.

In the systems view, the problem of society is the problem of order. Without society and its organizations, chaos and anarchy would result. The social order is seen as a basically well working system governed by universal values. In the phenomenological view, the organization as an entity striving to achieve a single goal or set of goals is resolved into the meaningful actions of individuals. Organizations do not think, act, have goals, or make decisions. People do (Georgiou, 1973; Greenfield, 1973), but they do not all think, act, and decide according to preordained goals. Thus the notion of the organization as a necessary order-maintaining instrument falls and the notion of organization as the expression of particular human ideologies takes its place. In this way, the problem of order becomes the problem of control (Dawe, 1970, p. 212). Or to put the question otherwise, the problem is not how order shall be maintained but rather who maintains it, how, and with what consequences. The image which this view calls to mind is the organization as a battlefield rather than the organization as an instrument of order. People strive to impose their interpretations of social reality upon others and to gain command of the organizational resources which will permit them to do so. The warfare in this battlefield usually takes the form of linguistic attack and defense, although the physical forms of warfare fit just as comfortably within the perspective. Take as an example this exchange between a principal and a new social worker after the social worker had spent considerable time and effort counselling a student who had been persistently truant and tardy.[2]

P: It was really simpler and more effective in the old days when the truant officer just went straight to the student's home and brought him back to school.

SW: Actually I do the same kind of work truant officers did, but I do it a different way.

P: But we used to get results more quickly. If the students wouldn't come to school, we expelled them. They had to recognize our authority or quit school. That's what I mean by simple. Now everything is complicated.

SW: But the purpose of my work is not to wind up a case quickly but to keep the student in school and learning. And in any case, Mr. Principal, legally I am the truant officer and you need my backing to expell a student for truancy.

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2. Personal communication to the author.

It is surely not hard to see in this exchange a battle going on over what the job of the social worker should be and behind that a struggle over how the school should define its reponsibilities to students. The issue is how the job of the social worker shall be defined and who shall control the school's power of expulsion. Each of the protagonists is inviting (and threatening) the other to accept a particular definition of the situation and the way it is proper to act within it.

The conflict view of organizations thus links up neatly with the decision-making tradition in organizational analysis. In a recent significant contribution, Perrow (1972, pp. 145-76) demonstrates how this tradition, developed brilliantly by March and Simon, complements the insights of Weber. A major concern of Weber was for the way in which the power of bureaucracies would be used outside the organization. March and Simon demonstrate how power may be marshalled within the organization. And as Perrow (1972, p. 196) points out, the supposed plight of professionals within bureaucracies is a minor complaint compared to what others have suffered from professionals who have been able to act out their ideological beliefs through their control of organizations.

We should also be grateful to Perrow (1972, p. 90ff) for pointing out the contrasts between Barnard's theory and his practice. For Barnard, (1938, pp. 46-61) organizations were by their very nature cooperative enterprises. In this respect, Barnard was a good systems theorist whose theory dealt with abstractions about organizations and not with the ideologies of those who ran them. In an astonishing case study, Barnard (1948) spoke to a group of the unemployed who had recently seen "police clubs flying, women trampled, men knocked down" (p. 64) in the following terms:

> I'll be God damned if I will do anything for you on the basis that you ought to have it just because you want it, or because you organize mass meetings, or what you will. I'll do my best to do what ought to be done, but I won't give you a nickle on any other basis. (pp. 73-4).

In his commentary on this situation, Barnard makes it very clear that he realized he was in a position of conflict over ideology. But his theoretical concern, lies not with the ideologies, but with his proposition that men under "states of tension" will do what is "utterly contrary to that which is normally observed in them" (p. 62). While he explains in detail how he won the ideological battle which gave him power to decide what the men "ought to have," he makes no mention of his final decision. The content of decisions is not important in systems theory. However, Barnard does take pains to denigrate the ideology of the unemployed workers and their claims for better treatment. He also considers in a footnote (p. 73-4) whether a person of "superior position" should swear in front of those of "inferior status", and confides that "the oath was deliberate and accompanied by hard pounding on the table."

In this example, Barnard as theoriest merely adds the notion of "states of tension" to his earlier developed principles of cooperative action in organizations. Do these ideas tell us the significant aspects about organizational life with Chester Barnard? The phenomenologist holds that

Barnard's ideology is the significant variable shaping the experience of many people in the organizations which he controlled. Without understanding the ideological issues involved in an organization and in particular without knowing what ideology is in control, the general principles of organization mean relatively little in terms of what people experience in an organization.

Organizational pathologies and cures.

The systems theorist looks for pathologies in the body of the organization itself. These stem from ill-adaptations of the organization to its environment, to the ultimate goals it should serve, or to the needs of individuals. The solution to these pathologies is obvious: Change the structure of the organization to improve the adaptation and thus the performance of the organization. The phenomenologist, on the other hand, sees structure as simply the reflection of human beliefs. If there are problems in organizations--and problems are certainly to be expected--they must therefore rest in conflicting beliefs held by individuals. Solutions to such problems cannot be found simply by changing structures. The root of the problem lies in people's beliefs and the ability to act upon these beliefs.

> Thus the argument that we must make organizations more liveable, more congruent with human values and motives, ignores the fact that it is one set of human motives and values which is in conflict with another set of motives and values. There is no abstract entity called organization which can be held accountable--only other people. (Schein, 1973, pp. 780-1.)

## IMPLICATIONS

Where do the ideas based in phenomenology leave the notion of "organization"? And what of the science that studies organizations? And where does a profession of educational administration which bases its practice on this science now find itself? In conclusion, let me briefly develop some answers to these questions and suggest some directions for future study.3

Organizations are definitions of social reality. Some people may make these definitions by virtue of their access to power while others must pay attention to them. Organizations are mechanisms for transforming our desires into social realities. But the transforming mechanism lies within individuals. It is found in individuals striving to change their demands or beliefs into definitions of reality that others must regard as valid and accept as limitations on their actions. This notion of organizations as dependent upon the meanings and purposes which individuals bring to them does not require that all individuals share the same meaning and purposes. On the contrary, the views I am outlining here should make us seek to discover the varying meaning and objectives that individuals bring

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3. The implications of these issues are developed more fully in my article, "Organizations as Social Inventions."

to the organizations of which they are a part. We should look more carefully too for differences in objectives between different kinds of people in organizations and begin to relate these to differences in power or access to resources.

Although this concept of organization permits us to speak of the dominating demands and beliefs of some individuals, and allows us to explore how those with dominating views use the advantage of their position, we need not think of these dominating views as "necessary," "efficient," "satisfying," or even "functional", but merely as an invented social reality, which holds for a time and is then vulnerable to redefinition through changing demands and beliefs among people. Our conceptions of organizations must be as complex as the reality we try to understand. These arguments suggest that organization theorists have been so busy defining the forest that they have failed to notice differences among the trees--and worse--have ignored relevant data that are not trees at all. It suggests, too, that an academic industry which trains administrators by disclosing to them the social-scientific secrets of how organizations work (Culbertson et. al., 1973) or how policy should be made indulges at best in a premature hope and at worst in a delusion. Where then may we go from here? Let me suggest some lines of development.

1. We should begin to regard with healthy scepticism the claim that a general science of organization and administration is at hand. Such theories carry with them not only culturally dependent notions of what is important in an organization but also prescriptive ideas of how study and enquiry into organizational problems should go forward. The movement toward international associations for the study of educational administration should be welcomed, but these associations should open windows on our understanding of organizations rather than propagate received notions of organization theory. If the movement can provide a comparative and critical perspective on schools and on our notions of how they should be run, the association will serve a valuable role. Since the dominant theories of organization and administration have their source in the United States, it is these ideas which should receive searching analysis before they are blindly applied in other cultural settings. In England, this critical examination has already begun (Baron and Taylor, 1969), though one is hard pressed to find similar critical examinations in other national or cultural settings.

2. Willy nilly the world does seem to be shrinking towards the global village. Yet there are still strong forces which maintain vivid cultural distinctions within it. Despite these forces, the interests of the mass media, which the academic community seems all too ready to ape (Perrow, 1972, p. 198), directs attention more frequently to the symptoms of social problems rather than to their sources. While the mass media are usually ready with prefabricated solutions to these problems, students of organizations should doubt the utility of solutions which ignore their sources in the truly critical and powerful organizations of our societies. If we are unwilling to understand our own organizations, or if we regard acquiring such understanding as a trivial task, we should be aware that there are often others willing and waiting to apply their own preconceptions and answers to the tasks of defining the organization, identifying

its problems, and prescribing solutions to them. Our own experience of our own organizations is a valuable resource. It is with this experience that the organization theorist must begin to understand the nature of organizations. Since an understanding of organizations is closely linked to control of them and to the possibility of change within them, the phenomenological perspective points to issues of crucial importance both to the theorist and the man of practical affairs.

3. The possibility of training administrators through the study of organization theory has been seriously overestimated. Such theory does not appear to offer ready-made keys to the problems of how to run an organization. Through credentials, such training does appear to offer sound prospects for advancement within administrative systems. While such training may increase social mobility, each society must decide whether it wishes to pursue this goal and, if it does, whether this method is the most appropriate for doing so. If training of administrators is to serve its avowed purposes, then it seems clear that the nature of the training must move in virtually the opposite direction from that advocated in recent years. That is to say training should move away from attempts to teach a broad social science of organizations-in-general towards a familiarity with specific organizations and their problems. That the training should continue to have critical and reflective dimensions should not conflict with this redirection of training programs. It appears essential also for training programs to develop a much stronger clinical base than is now common in most of them. In such training, both the theoretician and the practitioner must be intimately involved.

4. Research into organizational problems should consider and begin to use the phenomenological perspective. This redirection of research should awaken interest in the decision-making tradition of organization theory and in the institutional school of organizational analysis (Perrow, 1972, pp. 177-204) with its emphasis on the exposé and ideological analysis of specific organizations (Bendix, 1956). In methodology, research should turn to those methods which attempt to represent perceived reality more faithfully and fully than do the present highly quantified and abstruse techniques. And researchers should avoid prescribing solutions to pressing social problems on the basis of prescriptive theory and research. For example, those who concluded on the basis of the Coleman study that the achievement of black students in American schools might be raised by integrating black and white students were dazzled by the naturalist assumption that a statistical relationship represents social reality. They therefore were led to the error of believing that social relationships may be manipulated in the same way in which variables from the research design can be manipulated. In doing so, they failed to reckon with the reaction of black students to greater integration as a "solution" to their problems (Carlson, 1972.) Indeed researchers and social scientists might consider the cultural imperialism which is frequently inherent in their recommendations for solving social problems and strive first to understand (Berstein, 1971b, Sarason, 1971; Holbrook, 1971) the social and organizational world for which they hope to prescribe solutions.

5. A continued study of organizations from the perspectives of the social sciences is certainly warranted. Schools as one of the most significant

of our social institutions deserve particular attention. It seems appropriate, however, for students of schools as organizations to consider the meaning of their studies and to redirect them towards investigations which increase our understanding of organizations as they are before attempts are made to change them. Paradoxically the efforts which promise to yield the most penetrating insights into organization and the most practical strategies for improving them are those efforts (March, 1972) which deal with the way people construe organizational reality and with the moral and ethical issues involved in these construals.

If, as the phenomenologist holds, our ideas for understanding the world determine our action within it, then our ideas about the world--what really exists in it, how we should behave in it--are of utmost importance. And if our ideas about the world are shaped by our experience, then the interpretation of experience is also of paramount importance. It is this process, the placing of meaning upon experience, which shapes what we call our organizations and it is this process which should be the focus of the organization theorist's work. And unless we wish to yield to universal forces for determining our experience, we must look to theories of organizations based upon diverse meanings and interpretations of our experience.

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